

Lifestyle

HERO OF ENTREPRENEUR

TO US IT'S A MESS, TO SID IT'S

By SANDRA NAIMAN

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Sid Hurwitz loves his basement. For him it's a dungeon of glory, a laboratory, a repair shop, and a sanctuary.

It's also an amazing mess. But out of this mess he invented the device that was responsible for the success of the Entebbe raid, a device that wiped out radar and foiled the detection, reception and transmission instruments of Entebbe allowing the Israeli planes to land.

For him, this mass of messiness is paradise. It's his therapy and he'll tell you repeatedly, "My work has kept me alive."

There are miles of wires. Dozens of vacuum cleaner hoses seem to crawl over the doors like headless snakes, boxes on boxes of parts and numbered bits and metal plates are piled against the walls. Plastic shopping bags line the floor filled with unretrieved and occasionally unrepaired booty.

Anything broken, old, outdated, the "grief jobs" that won't or won't be repaired elsewhere, the appliances that require parts that are no longer manufactured are "cycled" around Sid's basement. And remarkably, he knows where everything is.

It's a curious museum of modern technology, slightly bent and decidedly out of order. And there is a steady flow of customers who break down those stairs, carefully carrying their toasters that no longer toast and irons that no longer iron.

From the time he ran a hardware and appliance repair shop to the golden days of his Shock Electric Company on Breda Avenue, he's been Canada's self-taught king of electronics.

"I was always a mechanical kid," he says. "Taking things apart and putting them together was my kind of fun. When I was 10 years old I used to work for a rag and scrap peddler. Out of five old bikes I could make three for 50 cents a bike."



